

Good News Daily

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Sunday, September 17

Acts 5:34-42 *“For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.”* (vv.38b-39 NIV)

Wise words spoken by a wise and revered teacher of the law, Gamaliel the Pharisee, to his fellow Pharisees, the Jewish leaders of the Sanhedrin, who were furious at Peter and Jesus’ disciples who were healing and preaching about salvation and Jesus’ resurrection. The disciples posed a threat to them and their power over the Jewish people, and so they wanted to kill Peter and the other apostles. Gamaliel’s speech persuaded them with the above message, and so the leaders were content to flog them and then let them go, ordering them “not to speak in the name of Jesus” (v.40).

The result? The apostles left the Sanhedrin rejoicing that they had been considered worthy of suffering on behalf of the risen Lord. Gamaliel was right. The spread of the Good News continued to grow because it was of God, not of man, and no amount of persecution and hate could stop the spread of God’s love and His offer of eternal life through trust and belief in Jesus. His Holy Spirit filled more and more people, and God’s truth, power, and grace began to flood the world.

1 Kings 19:8-21; Psalms 24, 29; John 11:45-47

Monday, September 18

Psalms 56 *When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?* (vv.3-4)

Hundreds of times in His Word, the Bible, God has spoken to believers about fear, saying “Fear not,” or “Do not be afraid.” or “let not your heart be troubled,” or other similar phrases. Isn’t it interesting that in every generation since the world began with Adam and Eve, God has found it necessary to address the problem of fear in his children’s hearts? He knows us better than we know ourselves, and because fear is such a crippler, God commands us not to give in to it, but to believe in His great love and power, and so to trust Him. Trust is truly the antidote to fear.

Many times in my life I have dealt with fear, and in those times when I would realize that I needed to ask for God’s help, He never let me down. He calmed my fears and filled my soul with His peace, which defies human logic because it is a supernatural gift of our loving Father. He often prompted me to look up Scriptures on fear, read and meditate on them, then trust Him to do what He had promised. One of my favorites is Isaiah 41:10: “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I

will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

Our job is to trust and obey. God will do the rest.

1 Kings 21:1-16; Psalms 57, 58; 1 Corinthians 1:1-19; Matthew 4:1-11

Tuesday, September 19

Psalm 62 *Trust in him at all times, o people, pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.* (v.8)

All Christians profess their belief in God, and in His Son Jesus Christ who died for the sins of all people, and that God raised him from the dead in order to provide forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all who repent, confess, and believe. Believing is one thing, but trusting, *really* trusting God is another matter.

When I realized this important distinction, I had to ask myself this question: If I say I believe in Jesus, but fail to really, truly, deeply trust him, then why is there this disconnect? As I pondered this question, the Lord led me to look back at the times when I failed to trust Him, and as a result, found myself floundering. But in those times when my wisdom and intellect could not get me through a valley and I trusted the Lord to do it, He did not disappoint. I wish that I could say that I now trust in Him at all times, but that wouldn't be the truth. But, as I grow closer to Him, I find that I am trusting more and more.

Brennan Manning wrote a wonderful book that helped me learn to trust, and I think the title alone pierced my spirit and peaked my curiosity: *Ruthless Trust: The Ragamuffin's Path to God.*

1 Kings 21:17-29; Psalm 61; 1 Corinthians 1:20-31; Matthew 4:12-17

Wednesday, September 20

1 Corinthians 2:1-13 *My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.* (vv.4-5)

Paul writes in this, his first letter to the church in Corinth, that when he first came to them with the Good News of Jesus, he purposely kept his language simple, not trying to impress them with eloquence, so it could be discerned that he was relying on the power of the Holy Spirit to speak through him. The Message puts it this way: “and so nothing I said could have impressed you or anyone else. But the Message came through anyway. God's spirit and God's power did it, which made it clear that your life of faith is a response to God's power, not to some fancy mental or emotional footwork by me or anyone else.”

To me, this reveals Paul's heart. Though he was an extremely well-educated Pharisee who had been trained by the revered rabbinic teacher of the law, Gamaliel, he refused to depend on the powers of his own speech,

but rather on God's power to direct his words. Humble in heart, strong in the Lord, Paul didn't want people to be drawn to himself, but only to the Lord.

I believe that all the good, effective preachers and teachers share this trait with Paul. They don't want accolades, they only want the Lord to be glorified and praised. Their focus is always on Jesus, not themselves. And that is exactly what the Lord asks of each of us.

1 Kings 22:1-28; Psalm 72; Matthew 4:18-25

Thursday, September 21

Psalm 70 *Hasten, O God, to save me; O LORD, come quickly to help me.* (v.1)

The Psalms are so wonderful because if you read through them you can find almost any emotion of the human heart displayed and laid bare before God. Psalm 70 is a very short (5 verses) but urgent plea from David for the Lord to come to his aid. It's like saying, "I'm just about at the end of my rope, and I need you right this minute, Lord! Help me right now, Jesus!" The last verse reiterates the first verse: "...come quickly to me, O God. You are my help and my deliverer. O LORD, do not delay."

I have always admired honest people who "tell it like it is," and David is one of the greatest at baring his soul before his almighty and powerful God and Father. What an inspiration he is, for he shows us that we never need to sugarcoat our prayer requests, because the Lord already knows what's in our hearts and minds and He wants us to not hesitate to tell Him how urgently we need Him.

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for always hearing our prayers. Quiet our hearts and minds so that we may hear Your reply.

1 Kings 22:29-45; Psalm 71; 1 Corinthians 2:14—3:15; Matthew 5:1-10

Friday, September 22

Matthew 5:11-16 *"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men."* (v.13)

Have you ever heard someone being referred to as "the salt of the earth?" What qualities come to mind? I don't know if many people today use this phrase to describe a really fine, honest, humble, and good person, but I can remember hearing this phrase used when I was growing up, and I today use it as a special compliment for persons who are set apart from the masses by the way they live their lives. Often, this person is seen to have a servant's heart.

Thought I wasn't initially aware that the "salt of the earth" was a phrase straight out of the Bible, I did grasp that such a person was in some way different from many other people. Now I see that God intends for all believers to be the salt of the earth, and we can only be that salt to the world

by staying connected to and focused on Jesus. Otherwise, we lose our saltiness.

The Message says verse 13 this way: “Let me tell you why you are here. You’re here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You’ve lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage.”

Help us, Lord, to be what You have created us to be.

2 Kings 1:2-17; Psalm 69; 1 Corinthians 3:16-23

Saturday, September 23

Matthew 5:17-20 *“For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”* (v.20)

The Pharisees and teachers of the law not righteous enough to enter the kingdom of heaven? What is Jesus teaching his disciples (and us) about righteousness here? What was the problem with the learned men of the day? Hadn’t they spent countless hours studying the Scriptures and didn’t they constantly strive to not break any of the law? Or, is true righteousness more a matter of internal, heartfelt obedience than external, legalistic obedience?

In chapter 23 of Matthew, Jesus explains in great detail what was wrong with the religious leaders of the day. In verses 3 and 5, he says, “...for they do not practice what they preach,” and “Everything they do is done for men to see.” Jesus calls them hypocrites no less than six times in chapter 23, saying that their outward appearance is that of righteousness but that inwardly they are full of greed, self-indulgence, and wickedness. They have “neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness” (v.23).

Cleanse my heart, dear Lord Jesus, and help me to live a life filled with your love, seeking to serve others, not myself, so that you may be glorified.

2 Kings 2:1-18; Psalms 75, 76; 1 Corinthians 4:1-7

by Anna Cash

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